

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER
THE HONORABLE KEN CALVERT, CHAIRMAN**

H.R. 2301, AUTHORIZING A NEW BRIDGE AT FOLSOM DAM

**TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE STEVE MIKLOS
SACRAMENTO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

April 10, 2002

MR. CHAIRMAN and distinguished members of the Committee, my name is Steve Miklos, and I am the former mayor and current councilmember for the City of Folsom, California. I also am past chair and currently serve on the Board of Directors of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, and it is in my capacity as past chair and current on the SACOG boardmember that I appear today in support of H.R. 2301, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to construct a bridge on Federal land west of and adjacent to Folsom Dam in California. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today regarding this legislation.

I thank this Subcommittee for holding this hearing today. Briefly, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments – also known as SACOG – coordinates transportation planning and funding for the entire Sacramento region covering six counties and eighteen cities and serving a population of 1,936,006 (one million, nine hundred thirty-six thousand and six) according to the 2000 Census.

SACOG appreciates your concern and commitment to ensuring our region's safety and economic security. This is truly one of those projects where we cannot do what needs to be done without federal involvement, and we thank you for taking up H.R. 2301 so expeditiously.

We also appreciate Congressman John Doolittle's leadership on this legislation. His legislation will secure the dam, our vital regional transportation infrastructure, and will do so in an economically efficient manner. Congressman Doolittle has courageously stood by his principles – even while under heavy fire – for over a decade, and our City and our region are fortunate to have him represent our interests in Washington.

My fellow SACOG boardmembers share all of the concerns raised by my colleagues on this panel today regarding the current situation at Folsom Dam. I will limit my testimony to briefly reviewing some of the major impacts to our region's transportation

infrastructure of a dam failure caused by a terrorist act. H.R. 2301 is urgently needed to ensure the security of Folsom Dam and to protect our investment in our transportation system.

H.R. 2301 will help ensure the physical and economic security of our citizenry. The bill will do so, in part, by protecting our freeways, our light rail, our local streets and regional transportation corridors, our rolling stock, and our other transportation assets from loss and damage due to a massive flood. I also wish to submit for the record today a copy of SACOG Resolution Number 42-2001, adopted while I served as chair of the SACOG board, expressing full support for Congressman Doolittle's legislation.

Modeling and contour maps give us a notion of where the flood waters are likely to rage, where they will flow, where they will sit for days, weeks, or even months before receding. What modeling and maps cannot tell us is how much the devastation will cost in terms of repair and replacement to our transportation infrastructure, and I believe it is fruitless to attempt to accurately quantify the impact. It is just too big. It is clear that virtually all of our major transportation infrastructure stands in the way of the flood waters, and it is unlikely that much will be left standing or serviceable after such a deluge. In spite of the foregoing, I will offer a few points for your consideration in an attempt to put the losses and impacts into some kind of perspective.

The 976,955 acre feet of water suddenly released by total dam failure would inundate much of Highway 50, portions of Interstate 80, portions of Interstate 5, as well as dozens of other regional transportation corridors. The Interstate 5 inundation would have inestimable impacts on transportation statewide, given the depth of the flood waters, the likelihood of water receding very slowly, and the fact that I-5 is the main north-south transportation corridor stretching from the Mexican border to the Canadian border. It is important to note that there is no alternative route to the east, and the western alternative would re-route large amounts of traffic into the Bay Area freeway system. The impact on that system, already in gridlock for much of the day, is unthinkable.

All of our bridges crossing the American River downstream from the dam are likely to be damaged or destroyed by a flood caused by a massive failure at Folsom Dam. This is even more disturbing given the resources expended over recent years to strengthen and widen several of the bridges, including ongoing work at Watt Avenue, a major north-south regional transportation corridor. In fact, the City of Folsom's recently-opened new bridge cost over \$75 million alone, and that bridge, along with two others within City limits, are directly in the path of what would likely be a tidal wave of water. It is a sobering and futile exercise to attempt to add up the cost of repairing and replacing just the bridges damaged and destroyed by such an event.

Also in the way of flood waters stand our airports, our light rail system, our Regional Transit's rolling stock and maintenance facilities, and private vehicles. In the interest of time I will not go into detail regarding these facilities and assets, but the subcommittee

can surely recognize that the cost to repair, replace, and reopen these facilities and assets too large to contemplate.

My comments thus far relate the general scope and cost of a flood caused by a failure at Folsom Dam. In short, the scope and cost would be enormous, and it should be a national priority to remove traffic from Folsom Dam Road. But I also believe Folsom Dam Road must remain open until the new bridge is in place. Folsom Dam Road is the easternmost river crossing downstream from the major river forks. It serves businesses and residents traveling between major employment centers in El Dorado County, eastern Sacramento County, and Placer County. Approximately 17,000 vehicles a day cross the dam – even with security limitations on the types of vehicles allowed on the road. The dam crossing is a major regional traffic connector providing access between jobs and housing in the three different counties. Some of our region's largest industrial and commercial employers use Folsom Dam Road, including Intel, Hewlett-Packard, and Blue Cross. And especially during the summer months, Folsom Dam Road is an indispensable crossing for visitors to Folsom Lake – the most visited state park in the State of California – and the region's parks and recreation facilities.

The crossing at Folsom Dam must be moved off the dam, but the impact of doing so without a replacement bridge in place would be devastating to the local and regional economy. H.R. 2301 is the necessary step in removing traffic from the dam, but we must also recognize the existing traffic patterns in our region. Folsom Dam Road is an inadequate, but essential, transportation artery between the three counties. It is

extraordinarily important for local circulation. Just as there is a balance between airport security measures and moving people efficiently onto departing flights, so too there must be a reasonable security system put in place to protect the dam while allowing the public to cross the dam until the new bridge is completed.

As outlined by my colleague Mayor Starsky, government efficiency mandates that the bridge should be a full-service, four-lane bridge. As Mayor Starsky argued, it would be extraordinarily wasteful to build a two-lane bridge when we know that two-lanes was wholly inadequate years ago. H.R. 2301 requires the bridge to be designed with appropriate sizing and linkages to support present and future traffic flow requirements for the City of Folsom. Present and future traffic flows require a four-lane bridge – at a minimum.

Mr. Chairman, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments is grateful for the opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 2301. We understand that there are many new priorities in our nation now that we have been awakened to new threats to our national security. We believe H.R. 2301 addresses one of the most important of these new priorities in light of the likely consequences of the catastrophic failure of the dam. We urge you and your subcommittee to support H.R. 2301 and work towards its speedy passage. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



